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Mr. B. H. Kamenske  
 Acting Chief, NCA  
 Voice of America  
 International Communications Agency  
 HIS Building, Room 3250  
 330 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20547

Dear Bernie:

Many thanks for your note of 27 October.

Let me assure you that the Wire Service editors understand their obligation to check with the field when they receive questions from VOA concerning current reporting. However, it is usually not possible for the Wire Service to do research. For example, I understand VOA recently asked the Wire Service for FBIS London to research 1974 Moscow broadcasts for the Arabic pseudonym of an American black activist. Our field bureaus do not keep historical files and retention of most materials is limited to 30 days. I suggest that on questions requiring file research, or touch on matters of propriety, that VOA query our liaison staff.

In answer to your question on our authorities concerning American citizens, the collection and processing of foreign media reports on the activities of U.S. citizens is circumscribed by several conditions. As you mentioned, we are not permitted to arrange special, unscheduled coverage for the specific purpose of reporting on an American's activities except under highly unusual circumstances specified under the law. In addition, any reports on Americans selected for processing from our normal coverage must clearly contain significant information on foreign areas or topics of legitimate interest to the foreign affairs community of the U.S. Government, or offer evidence by selective reporting or other editorial device of a foreign government's attitudes or policies. As a practical matter, our editorial personnel in Washington and abroad have standing instructions not to select for processing straight-forward media coverage of speeches, articles, interviews, and press conferences by Americans, official or otherwise. Of course, this does not apply to reporting by controlled (usually communist) media where the manner in which American activities and statements are presented indicate attitudes by the foreign government.

Incidentally, I understand the Urban statement to which you refer was also carried on the domestic service, read by an announcer. That's an easy one!

Thanks for the note and don't hesitate to phone me or [redacted] if we can help on policy matters.

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Sincerely,

[redacted]  
Director

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[redacted]  
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**International  
Communication  
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United States of America

Washington, D. C. 20547

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October 27, 1981

STAT

[Redacted]  
Director, FBIS  
P. O. Box 2604  
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear John:

Just a note of thanks for the help FBIS provided in securing the recent statement by the Polish Government spokesman Jerzy Urban. I am wondering whether his TV remarks were also carried on Polish Domestic radio? Also, a second "thank you" for the An-Nahar edition of Sunday which carried President Reagan's interview on the PLO issue.

When I queried the wire service personally, I told your duty officer that these were matters of concern to the entire U.S. foreign policy community and not just to VOA; I am sure you will agree with that assessment, given the situations in Poland and the Middle East these days. I hope you will pass on to the wire service chief, [Redacted], that I am aware of FBIS' staggering workload and that, in addition to applauding their efforts, I will do my part by limiting my requests to only those areas of broad U.S. foreign policy concern. I mention this because I've noticed a hesitancy on the part of the wire service officers to query overseas bureaus on occasion. I know they do this only to prevent further burdening an already overworked, but seemingly tireless field staff.

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There is one point I would like to have clarified for me, which may help in better understanding FBIS monitoring procedures. It is my understanding that FBIS may indeed report on the activities -- speeches, quotes, interviews, reports on, etc. -- of U.S. citizens (either while they travel abroad or while in the United States) which are carried by a foreign

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radio, press agency, and/or newspaper if FBIS monitoring of that media is part of its normal coverage. As I understand it, restrictions apply if FBIS were asked specifically to lay on coverage of an American Citizen which would include monitoring media outside FBIS' regular coverage schedule. Am I correct?

I hope we have a chance to get together again soon. My best to

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Sincerely,



B. H. Kamenske  
Acting Chief, NCA

P.S. I'm just sitting in for Alan Heil who is out with a bad back.